DIPLOMATIC HISTORY

1713–1933

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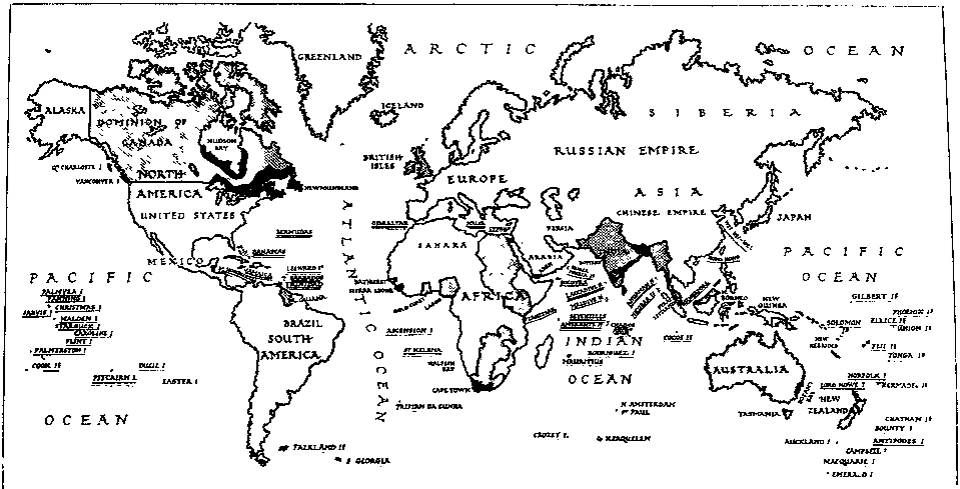
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TWENTY YEARS' ARMISTICE—AND AFTER.



THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN 1800 AND 1900

DIPLOMATIC HISTORY

1713—1933

By

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PREFACE

This book does not claim to be a complete history of international relations during the period which it covers; such a work would require many volumes, and would probably be beyond the capacity of any one man to write. In the following pages I have aimed rather at tracing the main threads which for more than two centuries have run through diplomatic history, and on occasion I have tried to point the moral as well as to tell the tale.

For reasons of space, accounts of campaigns, as well as of the domestic affairs of the various Powers, have been cut down to the minimum necessary to understand international relationships. The year 1933 has been chosen as the closing date, partly because the arrival of Hitler to power marks the end of one era and the beginning of another, but chiefly because of the lack, after that, of official documents upon which to base a narrative. Too much relating to the period 1933-1939 is still hidden for any final judgment to be passed upon the events of those years.

My thanks are due to Sir John Murray, K.C.V.O., for permission to reproduce in Appendix III an article which originally appeared in the *Quarterly Review*.

CHARLES PETRIE.

London, July, 1944.

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CHAPTER I

EUROPE AT THE TREATY OF UTRECHT

In Britain, France, and Spain the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were marked by the rise of strong national states and by the ensuing struggles between them. In Germany, on the other hand, the centrifugal forces gained the day, largely owing to the existence of the Holy Roman Empire, and their triumph was consecrated by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Italy, too, failed to attain unity at this time, partly because of the continual interference of France and Spain in her affairs, and partly because of the international character of the Papacy, whose possessions comprised the central provinces of the peninsula.

During the whole of the sixteenth century, and the first decades of its successor, the leading Power had been Spain. Her armies were the best in the world, and as Flanders, the Franche Comté, and the duchy of Milan (at this period more usually termed the Milanese) belonged to her crown, she held her French neighbour as in a vice. In the reign of Philip IV (1621–1665), however, she rapidly declined, more particularly after her defeat by Condé at Rocroi in 1643, and France began to take her place. Nevertheless, the supersession of Spain was a lengthy undertaking, and the struggle was rarely confined to the two countries principally concerned. Habsburgs reigned in Vienna as well as in Madrid, and France, in her wars with Spain, had always to reckon upon the hostility of the Austrian branch of the Spanish dynasty.

Louis XIV came to the throne in 1643, when he was not yet five, and he did not assume full power until the death of Cardinal Mazarin in 1661; from then until he himself died in 1715 the control of French policy was entirely in his hands. It was of him that the late Lord Acton wrote, "He was by far the ablest man who was born in modern times on the steps of a throne", and there would appear to be no reason to question this verdict.

In 1659 war between France and Spain had come to an end with the Treaty of the Pyrenees, and although this settlement meant the cession to France by Spain of a number of towns on the former's northern border, it did not enable her to break the ring of Spanish possessions by which she had been surrounded for more than a century. Spanish troops could still march through

friendly territory from the Milanese to the Netherlands: it is true that the sea-route across the Bay of Biscay and through the Channel had been barred to Spain by the defeat of the Armada and the development of Dutch naval power, but these waters were only safe for France so long as she remained friendly with Britain and the United Provinces.

The Treaty of the Pyrenees was, in effect, little more than an expression of the lassitude of the two countries which had been at war for many years. Spain came to terms because Philip IV, though not old, was an invalid, while France was glad of the opportunity to profit by an advantageous military situation that might change, and also because, in the event of the King of Spain dying without male heirs, she wished to make in peace the necessary preparations to grasp the Spanish heritage. Thus the Treaty of the Pyrenees was far from marking finality, and France possessed no guarantee of security except the financial impoverishment and military weakness of the government at Madrid.

Throughout his reign Louis endeavoured to improve the situation of his country by three methods, namely the weakening of Habsburg power inside the Empire, alliances with states to the east of Germany, and the direct force of French arms.

Of all French statesmen, not excluding Napoleon I himself, Louis XIV displayed the greatest skill in his policy towards Germany. He fully realized that the old Germanic constitution was in decay, but he saw that the interests of France demanded that he should seek to profit by the fact, rather than create a fresh order on the other side of the Rhine. He sought to influence rather than to command, and to play upon the jealousies of the different states with a view to keeping the country disunited. Napoleon I, on the other hand, was bent on purely personal aggrandizement, consistent with neither the interests, nor the welfare, nor the ambitions of his French subjects. The Emperor's reforms removed many of the obstacles to German unity, while his oppressions and aggressions in the long run brought the Germans together in opposition to him. Napoleon, in short, prepared the way for that unification of Germany which was to prove the undoing of France. Louis XIV made no such mistake, and to the end of his reign he could count upon the support of some of the German states in his struggle with the Habsburgs, while German unity was as remote as when he ascended the throne.

He was less successful, especially in his later years, with the

traditional allies of France, that is to say, Sweden, Poland, and Turkey. These Powers had interests, often conflicting, of their own, which they were not prepared to subordinate to those of France. For example, it was the Polish King, John Sobieski, who saved Vienna from the Turks in 1683 when it would have suited Louis very well for the Emperor to have lost his capital. Similarly, at a critical moment in the War of the Spanish Succession, in 1707, the King of Sweden, Charles XII, marched away to fight the Russians instead of coming to the aid of the hard-pressed French. On the whole, however, the efforts of Louis in eastern Europe, not least his encouragement of the Hungarian malcontents, did distract the Emperor to no inconsiderable extent.

Diplomacy without force behind it can achieve little, and Louis XIV and his minister, Louvois, may be said to have created the French army. Previously, the forces of the French Crown had looked to their leaders rather than to the King, for they were a kind of armed militia which regarded soldiering as an interlude, not as a profession. Louvois reorganized the army into brigades, regiments, battalions, and squadrons, and subjected it to regular discipline. The officers, too, were made to realize that they were under orders. The drill was improved out of all recognition, a proper commissariat was established, and a medical service was inaugurated. France was also fortunate in the possession of some first-class generals, of whom Turenne, Condé, Villars, and Berwick were the most notable.

In the pursuit of this policy the attitude of Britain was of great importance to Louis. In foreign affairs Cromwell had been anachronistic, and by espousing the cause of France against Spain he had shown himself unmindful of the change which was taking place in the balance of power in Europe. Charles II had many internal difficulties, and it was the aim of Louis to keep his cousin neutral by exploiting them. In the main he was successful, though he suffered a severe, if temporary, reverse in 1668 at the hands of the Triple Alliance of Britain, Sweden, and the Dutch. The French monarch never trusted Charles II, whom he once accused of "drawing back with one hand what he tended with the other". Charles knew quite well that the English forces could not save the Spanish Netherlands from the French, but he was determined at all costs to prevent the naval power of France from becoming unduly strong in the Narrow Seas. So it came about that neither monarch ever placed any real reliance upon the other in spite of

the pacts, agreements, and secret treaties which they made between them. The consequence was that the strange spectacle was seen of the greatest autocrat in western Europe encouraging the Puritans and Whigs in England to undermine the throne of Charles II, while the Stuart never missed an opportunity of showing the Bourbon what a nuisance he could be unless he was properly treated.

The year 1678, in which was concluded the Treaty of Nimeguen, marked the apogee of the reign of Louis XIV. By this date he had obtained all that France had fought for since the Treaty of Vervins eighty years before. The Pyrenees and the Alps were secure frontiers to the south and south-east. A powerful navy defended the seaboard alike in the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and the English Channel. The Spanish Netherlands had been in part absorbed, and the safety of Paris was assured by the possession of strongly fortified border towns; while with the recent acquisition of the Franche Comté the Spanish line of communication between the Milanese and the Low Countries had been cut. All that Louis had to do was to wait until the death of Charles II of Spain enabled him to force the division of the latter's inheritance on his own terms. What he did was to set to work to carry the frontier of France to the Rhine, and in the process he passed the point where defence of French interests became defiance of the rest of Europe.

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, whereby the exercise of the reformed religion was forbidden throughout France, was a serious blunder, for not only did the country sustain great economic loss owing to the quality of the Huguenots who went into exile, but the military and political damage was considerable. Huguenot soldiers taught the English and Dutch troops much of the discipline and drill which had made the armies of Louis irresistible, and among those who left the French service in consequence of the revocation were Ruvigny and Schomberg. Nor was this all, for the measure roused strong feeling in the Protestant countries against France, and in England this had not a little to do with the Revolution of 1688. Suspicion of the French King's designs had been growing for years among the princes and statesmen of these Powers, but when the Huguenot refugees began to pour in, the ordinary citizen, too, became disquieted, and a public opinion was gradually formed which was bitterly hostile to France.

During these years the leadership of the opposition to Louis became incarnated in William of Orange. An admirable judge of character, few men in the course of history have seen more closely into the motives of others, and he played with those by whom he was surrounded as if they were pieces upon a chessboard. Calculating as Bismarck, unscrupulous as Walpole, and pitiless as Napoleon, he became the symbol of antagonism to France, which threatened the land of his birth. Every other consideration was subordinate to this struggle, and the throne of England, to which he attained in 1689, only attracted William as a means to the great end of checking Louis.

As the seventeenth century drew to its close it became clear that Charles II of Spain had not much longer to live, and that it behoved those who considered themselves his heirs to bestir themselves. The claimants were three in number, namely the Dauphin, the Electress of Bavaria, and the Emperor. The Dauphin was the nearest heir by blood, for he was the son of the eldest daughter of Philip IV, but his mother had renounced all claim to the Spanish crown when she married Louis XIV, though it was a moot point whether this renunciation stood, in view of the fact that the dowry had never been paid. The Electress of Bavaria, the daughter of the Spanish King's younger sister and of the Emperor Leopold I (1658–1705), was next in succession, but her mother had likewise renounced her rights when she married the Emperor. Lastly, there was Leopold himself, for his mother, the aunt of Charles II, had made, unlike her nieces, no renunciation. If, therefore, the renunciation held good, the Emperor's claim was the best; but if not, then the Dauphin was the rightful heir.

In spite of this it was clear from the beginning that in the regulation of the succession legal interpretations would have to give place to practical considerations, for in spite of the encroachments of France during the previous forty years the Spanish monarchy was still by far the greatest of all Christian realms. If the Emperor succeeded to this inheritance the empire of Charles V would be revived, whereas if the prize went to France the rest of Europe would not unnaturally feel its very independence threatened. Accordingly, the two protagonists, Louis and William, negotiated a compromise which was effected without any great difficulty. This settlement is known as the First Partition Treaty, and it was concluded in October, 1698. The Electoral Prince of Bavaria, the weakest of the three claimants, was to have Spain,

the Indies, and the Low Countries; Naples, Sicily, the Tuscan ports, and Guipuzcoa were to fall to the Dauphin; and the Milanese was to go to Leopold's son by his second wife, the Archduke Charles.

Scarcely had this solution been reached than the Electoral Prince died, and months of hard bargaining took place before the Second Partition Treaty was concluded in May, 1700, between France, Great Britain, and the Dutch. By this the Archduke Charles was given Spain, the Low Countries, and the Indies, while the Dauphin was to have Naples and Sicily, the Milanese and Guipuzcoa. It was not a very satisfactory arrangement from the point of view of France, but, even so, the Emperor protested against it. As for the Spaniards, their indignation at this division of their empire knew no bounds: the Queen of Spain broke all the furniture in her room, and the Spanish Ambassador in London used such strong language that he was requested to leave the country.

The dying King of Spain then further complicated the situation by making a will in which he left the whole of his dominions to Philip, Duke of Anjou, the younger son of the Dauphin; if Philip refused to accept the inheritance it was to pass wholly to the Archduke Charles. There was to be no partition. Having sown this crop of dragon's teeth, Charles the Bewitched, the last of the Spanish Habsburgs, died on November 1st, 1700.

Louis was now called upon to take the most important decision of his reign, and it was not an easy choice that had to be made. Only a few months had elapsed since the conclusion of the Second Partition Treaty, and for the French King to go back on his word would make him an object of contempt in every Court in Europe. Moreover, France was in urgent need of a prolonged period of peace, and to accept the will meant war, for it was impossible to believe that the other Powers would make no effort to prevent such an increase of French influence both in Europe and in the Americas. It is true that the Second Partition Treaty would have placed an Austrian Habsburg on the Spanish throne, but it also meant an enormous increase of French territory when the Dauphin should succeed his father. The Archduke Charles was, too, but the second son of the Emperor, and there was always the possibility that with the passage of time relations between Madrid and Vienna would become less friendly; in any event it would not be easy for the two branches of the House of Habsburg to come to one

another's assistance with the French dominant in the Italian peninsula. Lastly, if the will was accepted Louis must abandon all hope of advancing the frontiers of France in the direction of the Low Countries.

There were equally weighty arguments on the other side. The attitude of the Emperor left no doubt that he would fight sooner than agree to the terms of the Second Partition Treaty, and if Louis had to go to war it was surely better to do so for the whole than for a part. In the latter case, too, he would have Spain against him, while it was more than likely that the English and Dutch would prove unable or unwilling to come to his assistance. Then, again, with a Frenchman on the Spanish throne the influence, if not the frontiers, of France would be immeasurably increased, and in future wars Spain, far from being an enemy, as for so long, would prove an invaluable ally. Louis called a council consisting of the Dauphin, the Chancellor, the Minister of Finance, and the Foreign Secretary, and after hearing their views he decided to accept the will.

At first it appeared as if the Emperor alone would withstand Louis by force of arms, for both England and the United Provinces recognized Philip as King of Spain. The French monarch, however, proved, not for the first time, to be his own worst enemy: on the death of the exiled James II in September, 1701, he recognized his son as King of England, and he proceeded to prohibit the importation of all British-manufactured articles into France. The former act showed a singular lack of understanding of the English character, for however much the ordinary Englishman might dislike the morose Dutchman who reigned over him, he was not prepared to accept a monarch at the dictation of the King of France, while the interference with their trade alarmed the whole commercial community. Leopold thus found allies in London and at The Hague, and the War of the Spanish Succession began.

It was not long before it became evident that Louis had undertaken a task beyond even his strength. The attempt to end the war at one blow by the capture of Vienna was foiled by Marlborough at Blenheim in 1704, and the following years witnessed the disasters of Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet. In Germany and Italy the French and their allies steadily lost ground, and the Elector of Bavaria was driven from his dominions. In Spain alone were French arms ultimately successful, and that because the bulk of the Spanish people made Philip's cause their own

against the Catalans and the Portuguese who were supporting the Archduke Charles. Louis was reduced to seeking peace upon the most humiliating terms, but his opponents thereupon hardened their hearts, and refused to hear of any compromise. The British Parliament, at the end of 1707, passed a resolution to the effect that "no peace can be safe or honourable for Her Majesty and her allies if Spain and the Spanish West Indies be suffered to continue in the power of the House of Bourbon", and as an indispensable preliminary to peace Louis was bidden to dethrone his own grandson. Observing, "If I must continue the war, I will fight against my enemies rather than against my own family", the French King determined to continue the struggle.

Meanwhile, events were gradually improving his prospects. Leopold I had died in 1705, and six years later his elder son and successor, Joseph I, followed him to the grave. The Archduke Charles had thus become the Emperor Charles VI, with the result that the Allies found themselves fighting not merely to force an unwanted monarch on the Spaniards, who were every day displaying an increasingly marked preference for Philip, but also to make the new Emperor the master of Europe by resurrecting the empire of his namesake Charles V. As these developments came to be realized in England, the paymaster of the Grand Alliance, opposition rapidly began to grow to a war in which English lives and English money were being sacrificed for what were felt to be no longer English ends. This feeling was later stimulated, after the accession of the Tories to power, by the appearance of Swift's pamphlet, *The Conduct of the Allies*.

The diplomatic history of the next two years is inextricably connected with the working of the party system in England, for its chief interest lies in the struggle between Harley and St. John on the one hand, and the Whigs, backed by the Emperor, on the other. The contest was of the bitterest, and the Tories made the widest use of the charge that Marlborough was prolonging the war for his own ends. Full advantage was also taken of Queen Anne's increasing resentment at the imperious airs of the Duchess of Marlborough. Finally, the Tories carried the day at Court, at Westminster, and in the country, and negotiations for peace were energetically conducted.

The actual Peace Conference opened at Utrecht in January, 1713, but as St. John soon wrote to the British representatives there, "Her Majesty is fully determined to let all negotiations sleep

in Holland", little was done in the Dutch town, while the real business was transacted directly between London and Paris.

The position of the British government was a delicate one in spite of the victory over the Opposition at home. In the previous year the bases of a settlement had been agreed between England and France, much to the discontent of the former's allies, and the French were taking advantage of this situation to impose terms upon the Emperor and the Dutch in the knowledge that their own agreement with England had rendered her suspect at Vienna and The Hague. Torcy, a nephew of Colbert, was the French Foreign Secretary, and he enjoyed the great asset that he had free hands, except for the Franco-British understanding, while St. John was hampered by the Barrier Treaty with the Dutch. This was one of those undertakings which are so lightly given during the course of a war, and which prove so inconvenient at the succeeding Peace Conference. It had been negotiated in 1709, and went far to establish the supremacy of the United Provinces in North-West Europe. It admitted the right of the Dutch to close the Scheldt, which they had obtained sixty years before, and it pledged England to obtain for them Spanish Guelderland: the Dutch were also allowed to garrison more towns on the French frontier than had previously been the case. Bad as this arrangement was from the British standpoint, it nevertheless existed, and it tied St. John's hands.

A further difficulty arose at this point, and it came very near to wrecking the negotiations altogether, in view of the fact that the Franco-British understanding of the previous year had provided for the retention by Philip of Spain and the Indies. At that time there had been four lives between Philip V and the throne of France in the event of the demise of Louis XIV, but the situation was suddenly changed by the death of the Dauphin, of his son the Duke of Burgundy, and of his grandson the Duke of Brittany. This left only a sickly child, later Louis XV, between Philip and the crown when the old King should die. St. John and the government saw themselves placed in the same difficult position as the Whigs had been at the death of Joseph I, for it was no more to the interest of Great Britain to see Philip King of France and Spain than to assist Charles to become both Holy Roman Emperor and Catholic King.

The first of these complications was solved by recourse to the unilateral denunciation of the Barrier Treaty. Swift prepared the

way with a pamphlet entitled *Some Remarks on the Barrier Treaty*, and the House of Commons then debated the matter. A vote was passed that the treaty contained "several articles destructive to the trade and interest of Great Britain", and the ministers who advised its ratification were declared "enemies to the Queen and kingdom". On March 1st the Commons addressed to Anne a long "representation on the state of the nation", and St. John contributed an article to the *Amsterdam Gazette* in its support. The States-General answered the allegations in a formal memorial, which the Lower House voted to be a "false, scandalous, and malicious libel". By the summer of 1712 the majority in the Commons (and probably in the nation) was so incensed against the Dutch that any attempt to carry out the terms of the Barrier Treaty was clearly impossible. St. John had skilfully surmounted his first difficulty.

The complication caused by the deaths of the French princes proved less easy of solution. St. John's first suggestion was that Philip should renounce the succession to the French throne, but Torcy advised him that this was impossible, since the Paris lawyers held that no renunciation by the rightful heir could be valid. However desirous the British statesman might be of reaching a settlement, he was not prepared to sacrifice a vital national interest out of respect for the French constitution, and he therefore made an alternative proposal. If Philip will not abandon his prospect of becoming King of France, let him hand Spain and the Indies over to the Duke of Savoy; in return he can have the Savoyard territories with the addition of Montferrat, Mantua, and Sicily; if and when Philip succeeds to the French crown, these north Italian provinces are to be incorporated in the French dominions, while Sicily is to go to Austria. This suggestion met with the entire approval of Louis XIV, who did not believe that his great-grandson would live, and who rejoiced in what appeared to him to be the practical certainty of a large extension of French territory to the south-east. Philip, however, preferred Madrid to Turin, even with the possible reversion of Paris, and the scheme came to nothing.

Meanwhile no effort was being spared by the Emperor to prevent the conclusion of peace, and early in 1712 he sent his great general, Prince Eugene, to see what could be effected by his prestige, but the government rose to the occasion, and saw that he became nothing more than a social lion. Indeed, there appears to

have been a Tory conspiracy to keep him drunk as the surest method of rendering him harmless. On the Continent hostilities had ceased so far as Great Britain was concerned. Marlborough had already been displaced as commander-in-chief by the Duke of Ormonde, and in May the latter received orders to "avoid engaging in any siege, or hazarding a battle": St. John, who had now become Viscount Bolingbroke, also communicated these instructions to the French.

Ormonde accordingly announced to the Allied troops that the British government was arranging an armistice for two months, to which he invited them to accede. He then marched towards Dunkirk, which, by arrangement with the French, he was under orders to occupy, but the Dutch governors of Bouchain, Tournai, and Douai refused to open their gates. Ghent he easily secured, as it had an English garrison, and he occupied Bruges without resistance. The Dutch and Austrians soon proved unable by themselves to resist the French, and the campaigning season of 1712 closed with Marshal Villars not only as victor in the field, but as master of several fortresses, including Douai and Bouchain.

With an armistice concluded, and the renunciation of the French crown completed, it became desirable to settle the outstanding points as soon as possible, and with this end in view Bolingbroke himself went to Paris at the beginning of August. His journey from Calais to the French capital was in the nature of a royal progress, so desirous were the French of peace after the long and exhausting war. When he arrived in Paris he took up his residence at the house of the Marquise de Croissy, Torcy's aunt, and the two statesmen soon became personal friends.

The business of Bolingbroke's mission was easily concluded. It was agreed that the Duke of Savoy was to have Sicily, and that his right to succeed to the Spanish throne after Philip and his heirs should be acknowledged in the acts by which the inheritance of the Bourbons was settled. Other points at issue were seemingly arranged with equal ease. On the Saturday after his arrival Bolingbroke was taken by Torcy to Fontainebleau, where he spent the night, and next day was received by the King. Louis expressed his desire for peace, and his respect for Anne; but he spoke so fast, and his articulation was so indistinct, that the Englishman, although an excellent French scholar, had some difficulty in understanding him. Everywhere Bolingbroke met with the most flattering reception, and when he went to the theatre to see

Corneille's *Cid* the whole house rose to receive him, and the performance was suspended until he had taken his seat.

When Bolingbroke returned to London he found, like many another British statesman both before and since, that what had seemed so easy and pleasant in Paris took on a very different complexion once he had left France. His colleagues in the Cabinet by no means relished the ovation which he had received on the other side of the Channel, and they were only too ready to create difficulties. The French were not slow in making capital out of this situation, and the reverses which their armies were inflicting upon the Dutch gave them an added advantage. Then an unfortunate quarrel took place between the lackeys of the French and Dutch representatives at Utrecht; this was elevated to the dignity of a national conflict, and the work of the conference was for a time suspended. At this point the British government decided to send the Duke of Hamilton to Paris to expedite matters, but before he could set out this nobleman was killed in a duel. A further delay thereupon ensued until his successor was appointed.

Fortune was certainly smiling upon Louis once again as the position of the British government became increasingly more difficult. It was impossible to meet Parliament until peace had been made, and indefinite prorogation was out of the question. By February, 1713, it had been prorogued eleven times, and a decision was essential. In that month, therefore, Bolingbroke sent Torcy what amounted to an ultimatum. He laid down in precise terms the British demands relative to the questions still outstanding, namely, the fishing rights off Nova Scotia, the monopoly of the navigation of the Amazon by the Portuguese, and the addition of Tournai to the Dutch Barrier: failing compliance war would be resumed in the spring. The threat had the desired result, and on Good Friday, April 3rd, 1713, about two o'clock in the afternoon, a post-chaise rattled down Whitehall: as it stopped at the Cockpit there alighted, all covered with dust, Bolingbroke's half-brother, George St. John, with the Treaty of Utrecht in his hand. The statesman welcomed him on the doorstep with open arms, and his relief can be gauged by his words, "It is the Lord's work, and it is marvellous in our eyes". The lapse of a few months, and several defeats by Villars, were necessary before the Emperor gave way, and signed the Treaties of Rastadt and Baden.

By the Treaties of Utrecht, Rastadt, and Baden, generally

grouped together under the name of the Peace of Utrecht, the following arrangements were effected:—

1. Philip V was recognized as King of Spain and the Indies, on the condition that the crowns of France and Spain were never to be united on the same head.

2. Naples, the Milanese, Sardinia, and the Netherlands were given to the Emperor, subject to the right of the Dutch to the military government of Furnes, Ypres, Ghent, Tournai, Mons, Charleroi, and Namur as their barrier against France. The Scheldt was to remain closed.

3. France was permitted to retain Alsace including Strasbourg, but she had to surrender the fortresses of Kehl, Breisach, and Freiburg, which she had seized on the right bank of the Rhine.

4. The Electors of Cologne and Bavaria were restored, the succession of the House of Hanover in England acknowledged, and James banished from France.

5. England received Gibraltar, Minorca, Newfoundland (subject to certain rights of fishing on the banks), Hudson's Bay, Acadia, and St. Kitts, and acquired by an Asiento, or agreement, with Spain the right to trade under strict limitations with certain towns in Spanish waters set apart for the purpose.

6. The Kingdom of Prussia was recognized, and received Upper Guelderland.

7. Sicily and part of the Milanese were given to the Duke of Savoy, and it was agreed that the fortifications of Dunkirk should be demolished.

Had Bolingbroke been able to have his way, the treaty would have been followed by a commercial agreement with France and a large step in the direction of freedom of trade between the two countries. In this respect he was too far in advance of his age. The manufacturers rose in revolt, the Whigs did everything in their power to foment the opposition, and a number of Tories voted against the government. Bolingbroke was no longer in the Commons to sway members with his eloquence, and his colleagues were only too ready to give him a fall. The vital clauses in the proposed treaty were rejected by nine votes, and a commercial understanding with France had to wait until the time of the younger Pitt.

Such was the settlement which was principally the work of two relatively young men, for Bolingbroke was only thirty-four, while Torcy was forty-seven. The methods employed to effect this pacification certainly left a good deal to be desired where the British government was concerned, but some, at least, of the blame must surely be shared with the Whig administration whose bellicosity had placed the country in so impossible a position. For the rest, the great merit of the treaty was that it recognized existing facts. France was the first Power in Europe, Philip was the monarch desired by Spain, Great Britain was building a colonial empire, and Prussia and Savoy were rising states: all these incontrovertible realities were admitted at Utrecht. As for Louis XIV, he had completed the work of Richelieu and Mazarin, and had given his country security. It is true that the more unjustifiable ambitions of the middle years of his reign had not been realized, but he had effected a very great deal. Spain was a friendly, almost a client, state; Italy and Germany were as disunited as ever; and to the north it was invasion of, not from, the Low Countries that had become the order of the day. If proof be wanted of the security which Louis XIV won for France, it lies in the fact that while the monarchy stood no invader established himself on French soil.

AFTER THE PEACE, 1713–1740

LOUIS XIV ended his long reign little more than two years after the conclusion of the Treaty of Utrecht, and with his death there ensued a somewhat confused period in the history of international relations: the allies of decades became enemies almost over-night, while sworn foes found themselves acting together against their erstwhile friends. This state of affairs continued until disputed successions in Poland and Austria brought about a re-distribution of forces more or less along the traditional lines, that is to say Britain and the Habsburgs against the House of Bourbon, with the lesser Powers inclining to one party or the other, not without occasional changes of side. At the same time the Utrecht Treaties (if this name may be given to the whole group) remained the established basis of the relations between the European Powers.

Had Louis XIV lived, or had his immediate successors possessed his experience, it is possible that the Diplomatic Revolution of 1756, by which France became the ally of Austria, might have been anticipated by more than a generation. In the eyes of the old King there were two sets of Powers in Europe in 1713—the satisfied and the greedy: in the first category were France and Austria, and in the second Great Britain and Prussia. On January 3rd, 1715, he gave the Comte du Luc, whom he had just appointed ambassador to Vienna, very definite instructions in this sense. In view of the growing power of Hanover, which was now joined with Great Britain in a personal union under the Guelphs, and of the Hohenzollerns, who had been advanced at Utrecht from the Electoral to the Royal dignity, Louis told his representative to try "to establish between the House of France and that of Austria a union as advantageous to their interests as it will be essential to the general peace of Europe". There was much to be said for such a line. France and Austria had no longer any reason to fear one another. The former had been compelled to realize that she could not make head against a continent in arms, and her King's dreams of universal dominion had perforce been abandoned. As for the Habsburgs, they no longer reigned in Madrid and they were only in the Low Countries on sufferance, so France was at last free

from the danger which existed while their dominions encircled her. The potential aggressors were Great Britain and Prussia, and as against them Versailles and Vienna had a common interest in the preservation of the *status quo*. So Louis regarded the situation, and the rest of the century was to prove him correct, but many years elapsed, once his dominating personality was removed, before those responsible for the conduct of French policy adopted his opinions, and by then it was too late. As the late Lord Salisbury wrote, "The commonest error in politics is sticking to the carcases of dead policies".

The deaths of Anne and of Louis XIV, in 1714 and 1715 respectively, seriously affected the mutual relations of their two countries, and for a short space there was something in the nature of an Anglo-French Entente. Neither the new dynasty in Britain nor the regency in France was particularly secure, and it is thus hardly surprising that the governments in question should come closer together. The Jacobites, therefore, were viewed askance by the Regent Duke of Orleans, while the British government could be relied upon to thwart any intrigue on the part of Philip V either to succeed, or to obtain control over, the young French King. On each side of the Channel there was a statesman who realized the advantage of peace between the old rivals, and while Sir Robert Walpole and Cardinal Fleury remained at the helm pacific counsels were predominant.

The earlier part of the eighteenth century witnessed the decline of three Powers which had been very prominent during its predecessor, namely Holland, Sweden, and Turkey. The United Provinces emerged from the War of the Spanish Succession victorious but exhausted. The effort to maintain their position as a Great Power was too much for the Dutch, whose resources were inferior to those of their neighbours, and they rapidly sank to the second rank of European States. William III had made The Hague one of the great political centres, but after 1713 it became a mere backwater.

Sweden was also exhausted by war, in which she had finally been unsuccessful, and she was no longer the Great Power of the North. Charles XII was killed in 1718, and three years later there was concluded the Treaty of Nystad, by which Russia became possessed of Livonia, Estonia, Ingria, and part of Finland. Earlier arrangements had necessitated the sacrifice by Sweden of Bremen and Verden to Hanover, and of a portion of Pomerania to Prussia.

The Treaty of Nystad may be said to mark the appearance of Russia as a Great Power, and in the Baltic area she henceforth took the place of Sweden. The accession of the House of Hanover in England also had the effect of increasing British interest in the problems of Northern Europe, though this interest had an economic, as well as a dynastic, foundation, for it was from the Baltic countries that Britain derived no small part of the timber and naval stores which she required for her growing fleet.

The decline of the Ottoman Empire was, perhaps, less apparent than that of the United Provinces and Sweden, but it was no less real. The revival under the Kiuprili viziers, which had brought the Osmanli to Vienna in 1683, had proved to be their last big offensive effort, and since then the Treaties of Carlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718) had marked the decay of the Sultan's power. All the same, the Turks still constituted a respectable force, especially when on the defensive, and both Austrian and Russian armies sustained many reverses at their hands during the course of the eighteenth century. Turkey was by no means yet reduced to the position of "The Sick Man of Europe".

It will thus be seen that the decade following the Utrecht Treaties was marked by a general pacification in the north and west of Europe, and by the emergence of new factors as well as by a diminution in the importance of some of the old ones.

The first threat to the new order came from Spain, and to this several causes contributed. Philip V was embittered by the progress of events in France, and was prepared to listen to desperate counsels. In any event he was completely dominated by his second wife, Elizabeth Farnese, who wished to see her sons on Italian thrones, since the heirs to the Spanish crown were Philip's children by an earlier marriage. The feelings of the King and Queen were also shared by many of their subjects, who had abated none of their original dislike of the partition of the Spanish empire, and who wished for the return of the Italian provinces with which Spain had many an old tie.

Nevertheless those aspirations would have been of little practical importance had it not been for the work accomplished by Cardinal Alberoni in the regeneration of Spain. He had succeeded in creating a fleet, and in April, 1717, suddenly put the weapons which he had forged to their trial-stroke. A Spanish expedition sailed from Barcelona to Cagliari, and by the end of September all Sardinia, which had been assigned to the Emperor

at the peace, was in Philip's hands. Charles VI, who had no fleet of his own, was powerless, and when he turned to Britain for assistance he was informed that he must first of all settle his differences with the Dutch, whose right to garrison the frontier towns of the Spanish Netherlands he had hitherto refused to acknowledge.

These differences between London and Vienna encouraged Alberoni, and it was not long before he began to meditate nothing less than the wholesale revision of the Utrecht settlement. He aimed at overthrowing both the French regency and the House of Hanover by a combination of Sweden, Russia, and Prussia, while he endeavoured to rouse the Hungarians against the Emperor. These projects had the not unnatural result of bringing together those whom they threatened, and on August 2nd, 1718, the Quadruple Alliance to curb Spanish ambitions was concluded in London between Great Britain, France, Austria, and the United Provinces. By this time the greater part of Sicily, as well as Sardinia, was in Spanish hands, and it was not until Philip's fleet had been destroyed by the British off Cape Passaro that the tide began to turn. In spite, however, of this action diplomatic relations between London and Madrid were not broken off, and the British fleet was nominally an auxiliary of the Emperor.

Alberoni and his master still refused to submit. An expedition was got ready to restore James III to his throne, and in the following year a few Spanish troops did actually land in Scotland, while the so-called Cellamare conspiracy against the Regent was engineered in France. The Anglo-French reply was a declaration of war, and in due course a French army invaded Spain, while a British force captured Vigo. These disasters brought about the fall of Alberoni, but they did not end the war, as Philip fought on in the hope of securing better terms. His enemies, however, were adamant, and in February, 1720, he gave way. Sardinia passed to the Duke of Savoy, who henceforth took his regal title from the island, while Sicily was given to the Emperor. As for Philip, he was compelled to renew his renunciation of the French throne, and to recognize the Emperor's claim to the Italian provinces which he now occupied.

In this way the first attempt to upset the Utrecht settlement was frustrated, but it was only frustrated because in the last resort the Powers were prepared to go to war in defence of the peace treaties. At the same time they were wise enough to allow modi-

fications, as in the case of Sardinia and Sicily, where these seemed advisable.

Elizabeth Farnese was not daunted by the failure of Alberoni to promote her projects in Italy, and when she found that the Congress of Cambrai (1724–1725) was unlikely, owing to the Emperor's opposition, to do anything for her children, she persuaded her husband and the Spanish government to make a direct approach to Charles. The emissary chosen for this purpose was Ripperdá, a Dutchman who had changed his nationality once and his religion twice, and who was one day to become a Moslem in the service of the Sultan of Morocco. The moment was not ill-timed, for the Emperor was on the worst of terms with Britain, partly owing to her opposition to the Ostend East India Company and partly owing to the German policy of George I as Elector of Hanover, which favoured the Hohenzollerns too much for the Habsburg taste.

The Emperor's terms were, all the same, high, and the negotiation might have come to nothing had not the new French Regent, the Duke of Bourbon, at that very moment (March, 1725) sent back the Infanta who was to be the bride of Louis XV. This insult threw Philip into the arms of the Emperor, and at the end of the following month the Treaty of Vienna was signed. By this, and a further, arrangement Charles promised that two of his three daughters should marry Don Carlos and Don Felipe, the sons of Philip V and Elizabeth Farnese, and that, if he himself should die before Maria Theresa became marriageable, she should wed Don Carlos. In the event of war Austria was to have the Franche Comté, Alsace, and Strasbourg, as well as Metz, Toul, and Verdun, while the Spanish share was to be Roussillon, Cerdagne, Navarre, Gibraltar, and Minorca. Spain also guaranteed to Austria the privileges of the most favoured nation in the Peninsula, and an opening for the Ostend Company in the Indies.

The Western Powers had once more drawn together in the face of the Spanish threat, and on September 3rd, 1725, there came into existence the Alliance of Hanover between France, Britain, and Prussia. It professed to be merely defensive, but it provided for the maintenance of the balance of power, threatened by the prospective marriage of Don Carlos and Maria Theresa. The fact was that the Powers concerned were seriously disturbed both on political and economic grounds: they could no longer patronize the Emperor at the expense of Spain, nor assume the protection of

Spain against the Emperor, while the commercial classes in England by no means relished the prospect of sharing their privileges with the subjects of Charles, and of the Spanish fleet protecting the operations of the Ostend Company.

In spite of the Treaty of Vienna the alliance of Spain and Austria was not a very happy partnership from the beginning. The Spaniards laid siege to Gibraltar, but the Emperor did nothing to assist them, and Ripperdá fell into disgrace. Meanwhile events in France were tending to bring the two Bourbon Powers together. The marriage of Louis XV considerably diminished any prospects of succession to the French throne which Philip might still entertain, and the dismissal of the Duke of Bourbon removed one who had become anathema to the King and Queen of Spain. Above all, Fleury was working for a general peace. In these circumstances it is not surprising that in May, 1727, an agreement was reached by which the Emperor promised to suspend the Ostend Company for seven years, and the Spaniards abandoned the siege of Gibraltar.

The Congress of Soissons met the following year to consider the general state of Europe, and as a result of its lengthy deliberations as well as of the death of the last Farnese Duke of Parma one of the Spanish Queen's ambitions was realized, for in March, 1732, Don Carlos formally took possession of that duchy with the consent of the Powers, including the Emperor. So long as Britain and France held together, all attempts to upset the Utrecht settlement by force had failed, and its modification had been effected, not by unilateral action, but by general agreement.

At this point the centre of interest shifted north to Poland, where the death of Augustus II, who was also Elector of Saxony, in 1733 raised one of those succession problems of which the eighteenth century was so prolific. The native candidate for the vacant throne was Stanislaus Leszczynski, who was duly elected by the Sejm. He and his supporters looked to France for help, and that on several grounds. In the first place his daughter, Marie, had married Louis XV, and in the second it was the traditional policy of France to maintain the independence of Poland, as of Sweden and Turkey, as a check upon the House of Habsburg. The French government was not slow to champion a cause so peculiarly its own. Four million livres were sent to Warsaw to be distributed among those Poles whose support of Stanislaus might otherwise prove somewhat lukewarm, while in a circular letter,

addressed to all its representatives abroad, it declared that, as the Emperor, by massing troops on the Silesian frontier, had sufficiently revealed his intention of destroying the liberties of Poland by interfering with the free election of her King, his Most Christian Majesty could not regard with indifference the political extinction of a Power to whom he was bound by all the ties of honour and friendship, but would do his utmost to protect her against her enemies.

These were brave words, but they took no account of the new factor which had arisen in eastern Europe, namely Russia. Pressure could always be applied to the western possessions of the Emperor to compel him to moderate his ambitions elsewhere, but the remote position of the Tsar and his dominions rendered him unsusceptible to such methods. Russia and Austria had no desire to see a revival of French influence in Warsaw, and they therefore brought forward as their candidate the son of the dead King, also named Augustus. A Russian army entered Poland to give effect to this policy, and before long Stanislaus was besieged in Danzig, while the rest of Poland was in the hands of his rival and the Russians. A French expedition arrived too late to change the course of events, and in January, 1736, Stanislaus finally renounced his rights. France was unwilling to waste any more men or money on her ally, more particularly as she was finding ample compensation for her reverses on the Vistula in the triumphs of herself and her allies in Lombardy and on the Rhine. "Must we", asked Fleury, "ruin the King to aid his father-in-law?" There could be no doubt about the answer, but the traditional French influence in Poland had received its death-blow.

The repercussions of the War of the Polish Succession in Italy were not long in making themselves felt, for if France could do little to hamper the operations of Russia, she could attack Russia's ally, the Emperor. War was declared in October, 1733, and an offensive and defensive alliance made with the King of Sardinia. By this time the ties of friendship between Madrid and Vienna had been broken, and in the outbreak of war in Italy the Queen of Spain saw the opportunity of further advancement for her children. Accordingly, on November 7th, the two Bourbon Powers signed the Treaty of the Escorial. Louis and Philip pledged themselves and their posterity to eternal friendship: they guaranteed each other's possessions both in Europe and overseas: and Don Carlos was confirmed in his duchy as well as being promised the

reversion of Tuscany on the extinction of the Medici; in addition he was to have Naples and Sicily. France further pledged her aid to Spain if the latter were attacked by England. Finally, "all earlier treaties made between France and Spain, and between their majesties and other Powers, shall no longer have effect between France and Spain". Such was the first of the three Family Compacts between Paris and Madrid which played so great a part in the diplomatic history of the eighteenth century.

The progress of the war favoured the allied monarchs rather than the Emperor, and Don Carlos was soon in possession of Naples and Sicily. Victory would have been even more complete had it not been for the extreme difficulty of working with Charles Emmanuel of Sardinia, who would neither fight a decisive battle nor lend his artillery for a siege. In consequence, he was suspected both in Versailles and Madrid of being ready, for a sufficient bribe, to change sides, and aid the Emperor to evict the Bourbons from Italy. Nor were relations between the French and Spanish troops in the field any too happy. Of the allied armies the Spaniards unquestionably displayed the best military qualities, and they were the most effectively supported by their Government. The French fought well, but their discipline was not what it had been in the days of Louis XIV, and the war itself was unpopular in France, where it was believed to be the result of a low marriage, for so the match between Louis XV and Maria Leszczynska was regarded.

Cardinal Fleury had never, as has been shown, been an enthusiastic supporter of the war, and he neglected no opportunity of bringing it to an end, but it was not until the summer of 1739 that, in consequence of yet another Treaty of Vienna, all the Powers concerned were again at peace. Substantial modifications were made in the Utrecht settlement (with the approval of Great Britain and the United Provinces) as this affected Italy. Don Carlos obtained Naples and Sicily, but he had to surrender Parma to the Emperor in exchange, while the King of Sardinia received the benefit of some frontier rectifications. Not less important were the clauses relating to Lorraine and Tuscany. The French government, assuming that Francis of Lorraine would marry Maria Theresa, and ultimately be elected Emperor, declared that an Emperor holding Lorraine and Bar would be a standing menace to the security of France. It was agreed, therefore, that Stanislaus should renounce his claim to Poland, and should be indemnified

with Lorraine and Bar, which were to revert to France on his death. The Duke of Lorraine, in his turn, was to succeed to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. The preliminaries of this treaty were signed as early as October, 1735, but, as we have seen, nearly four years elapsed before it was finally ratified.

So ended the War of the Polish Succession, and after many alterations the alignment of the principal Powers was roughly what it had been in the later years of Louis XIV. France and Spain were allied against the Emperor, and the House of Savoy was throwing its weight first into one scale and then into the other. All that was required to restore the old balance was for Britain to range herself on the side of the Habsburgs, and it was not long before this development, too, took place.

The clause in the Treaty of Utrecht relating to the Asiento had for some time been a fruitful source of trouble between London and Madrid, for the days were passing when quarrels could be confined to colonial waters. As the eighteenth century grew older the world became a great deal smaller, and the action and reaction of events inside and outside Europe began to be increasingly felt. In any case the privilege of the Asiento lent itself to a variety of interpretations. There can be no doubt but that the South Sea Company grossly abused its right to send annually one large trading ship to the Spanish colonies, and a widespread illicit trade sprang up, partly under cover, and partly independently, of the Company, while smugglers went to and fro with great frequency between Jamaica and the mainland. Spain replied by sending out gunboats, called *guarda-costas*, whose captains sometimes behaved with excessive severity. A notable example of this occurred in 1731, when one Jenkins was forcibly deprived of his ear, the display of which to sympathetic legislators in the lobby of the House of Commons later had much to do with rousing Parliamentary opinion against Spain.

In actual fact neither side had anything approaching clean hands. If there were Spanish privateers off the coast of Jamaica, there were English off Havana and Honduras. If Jenkins lost his ear and some other captains their goods, Spanish shipowners had suffered in their turn. If Englishmen had been seen working in irons in the harbour of Havana, Spaniards had been publicly sold as slaves in the British colonies. Popular fancy in both countries was not slow to exaggerate what was taking place, so that, in England it was believed that hundreds of sailors were rotting in

Spanish dungeons, and in Spain that an English captain had compelled a Spanish nobleman to cut off and devour his own nose. Nevertheless, public opinion was definitely more bellicose in Britain than in Spain, and religious hatred was freely invoked; indeed, had it not been for public-house Protestantism the differences between the two countries might well have been adjusted.

Throughout 1738 and 1739 negotiations continued, and although Walpole was sincerely desirous of preserving peace, his administration was every day growing weaker. The Opposition stormed at him for alleged subservience to a foreign Power, while the popular agitation increased rather than diminished. Nor did the British Prime Minister get the help from Fleury which he might have expected. If, the Cardinal seems to have argued, Spanish attention can be diverted westwards, Elizabeth Farnese may cease to worry me with regard to Italian matters. Accordingly he blew hot and cold, and in due course the pot boiled over, and in October, 1739, Britain declared war on Spain. This was one of the earlier examples of hostilities being forced by public opinion upon a British government contrary to its better judgment.

While Elizabeth Farnese was troubling the waters of the Mediterranean for her own better fishing for Italian thrones, and English captains and Spanish *guarda-costas* were boarding one another off the coasts of the Americas, the problem of the Austrian Succession was looming ever larger in the eyes of European statesmen. Like their Spanish cousins at the end of the previous century, the Austrian Habsburgs were without male heirs. Leopold I had endeavoured to meet this difficulty by providing that in such circumstances females should succeed, with the special proviso that the daughters of the Archduke Joseph were to take precedence of those of his brother Charles. This arrangement was altered, after the death of Joseph in 1711, by the enactment, in 1713, of a secret family law, known hereafter as the Pragmatic Sanction, according to which Charles VI gave his own daughter priority over his brother's, and at the same time insisted strongly on the indivisibility of the Habsburg dominions, a principle which was now adopted for the first time. It may be added that in making this change the Emperor was well within his rights.

The daughters of Joseph I accepted the Pragmatic Sanction, as in due course did Hungary and the hereditary dominions of the House of Habsburg. This was an important step gained, but to

secure the recognition of the European Powers was far more necessary, and for many years the foreign policy of Charles VI was directed to this object. By the close of 1739 he had realized his purpose, though more than once he had been compelled to pay heavily, and among the sacrifices was the Ostend Company in 1731. Nevertheless, with the exception of Bavaria and the Palatinate the Powers of Europe were pledged to support the accession of Maria Theresa to the undivided Habsburg possessions, though what that pledge was worth in the case of some of them was soon to be seen.

Unfortunately for his daughter, the Emperor had omitted the precaution of reinforcing his diplomacy by arms and money. Years before, Prince Eugene had warned him that the best guarantees of the Pragmatic Sanction were a strong army and a full treasury, but in 1740 he had neither. The treasury was all but empty; the revenues had shrunk to half the income of 1733; while expenditure and indebtedness had increased, and the taxes, at once oppressive and unproductive, were causing widespread discontent. The army, demoralized by defeat, with its principal leaders discredited, and its ranks depleted to half their proper strength, urgently needed reorganization and reforms which the financial situation rendered impossible. Above all, the control of the central government over the provinces was weak and ineffective, while the Austrian Netherlands were too far away from the main body of the monarchy to be adequately succoured if they were seriously attacked. All these facts must be taken into account in any estimate of the foreign policy of Charles VI.

At home he had been neither a strong nor a successful ruler; he had done little or nothing to check abuses or to effect reforms; his relations with his neighbours had been dictated rather by ambition than by interest; and his personal character was as far from being estimable as his capacity was from being adequate; yet the peculiar circumstances of the moment rendered his death as inopportune as possible. Charles VI died on October 20th, 1740, and on December 16th the Prussians invaded Silesia. The War of the Austrian Succession had begun.

CHAPTER III

THE RISE OF PRUSSIA, AND THE WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION, 1701–1748

To understand the motives of Frederick II of Prussia in falling upon Austria in this way it is necessary first of all to examine the conditions then existing in the Hohenzollern dominions, which had so recently been erected into the Kingdom of Prussia.

The state had been formed out of wholly dissimilar components, and this fact never failed to exercise very considerable influence upon the government in Berlin. The most important of the Hohenzollern territories was the Mark of Brandenburg. This province had come into the possession of the ruling family in 1415, when it was conferred by the Emperor Sigismund on one of his most faithful adherents, the Burgrave Frederick of Nüremberg, of the House of Hohenzollern.

Of almost as great importance was Prussia, from which the new kingdom had taken its name, for the Emperor would not permit the Elector of Brandenburg to assume the regal title from territory within the Empire of which he himself was suzerain. The history of Prussia had been a stormy one ever since the Polish Duke Conrad of Masovia had invited the Teutonic Knights into his land in 1226 to combat the heathen Prussians. The Order successfully performed this task, but in due course it lost its original spiritual character, and as it refused to admit any of the local nobility into its ranks, its rule came to be resented by the inhabitants as an alien domination. In 1410 the Knights were defeated by the Poles at the battle of Tannenberg, as a result of which they were obliged to cede part of their territory: fifty years later a further cession was forced upon the Order, which also had to acknowledge the suzerainty of the King of Poland for the rest of Prussia.

In the early years of the sixteenth century the doctrines of the Reformation began to reach the Baltic lands, and at that time the Grand Master was Albert of Brandenburg, a grandson of the Elector Albert Achilles. In due course he became a Protestant, and, with the consent of the King of Poland, he proclaimed himself hereditary Duke of Prussia. His grand-daughter, Anna,

eventually succeeded to the duchy, and as she married the Elector John Sigismund of Brandenburg, her Prussian possessions passed to the Hohenzollerns of Berlin.

There were other territories scattered about Germany which belonged to the dynasty. Anna was also co-heiress of the Dukes of Julich, Cleves, and Berg, and although the Hohenzollerns did not succeed in laying hands on all this territory they did secure Cleves, Mark, and Ravensberg. The Treaty of Westphalia marked further gains, for the Great Elector was awarded Lower Pomerania, as well as the secularized bishoprics of Minden, Magdeburg, and Halberstadt. In 1701 his son, Frederick I, assumed the title of King of Prussia, and, as has been shown, at Utrecht the possessions of the Hohenzollerns were further increased by the addition of Upper Guelderland.

The fact that the Kingdom of Prussia was not a compact state exercised an influence upon the foreign policy of its rulers which it would be impossible to exaggerate. The aim of Berlin was to link up these various territories, which otherwise were by no means easy to administer. Frederick William I (1713–1740) took an important step in this direction when he obtained Stettin and its districts by the Treaty of Nystadt, but whole Polish provinces still separated Brandenburg and East Prussia, while the latter itself was almost bisected by Ermeland. The desire for territorial acquisition which was thus developed in the Hohenzollerns was to have the most important consequences in the next two centuries, first for Germany, then for Europe, and finally for the whole world.

Not only were the Hohenzollern dominions scattered, but they were, as the wars of the eighteenth century proved, largely indefensible. They had no natural frontiers, so that there was an added inducement to further expansion.

Frederick William I forged the weapons which his son wielded so skilfully. France at this time was reckoned to have a standing army of 160,000, Russia one of 130,000, and Austria one of 90,000. When the King succeeded his father the Prussian land forces numbered about 30,000, and were maintained by means of subsidies from other Powers, which, of course, were only available in time of war. By the time of his death he had raised the army to 80,000, and there was in addition a well-filled treasury, although the population of the country was not more than two millions. This feat was only rendered possible by organizing the state on a military basis, with an officer caste as its most distinguishing

feature: in effect, Prussia during the reign of Frederick William I may well be described as a polity of officers.

He was not an attractive figure, but he did manage to prevent other European nations from fighting out their quarrels in North Germany. "It is no mere boast", he said, "that I have won honour for the House of Brandenburg. All my life I have never sought alliances, nor made advances to a foreign Power. My maxim is to injure no one, but not to let myself be slighted." This boast was not wholly justified, but Ranke was right when he said that Prussia might have advanced on other lines than those laid down by Frederick William I, for, more than any other state in modern history, she is what her rulers have made her. Yet when he died contemporaries did not realize what he had done. Everybody abroad ridiculed him as one who was always preparing for war and never fought, while the Austrians declared that his soldiers, trained by profuse thrashings, would desert by the thousand when the test came. It was not the last time that the world underestimated the strength which Prussia had been quietly developing.

Such was the Power which precipitated the War of the Austrian Succession. Her new King had, on the death of Charles VI, sent the most friendly letters to Maria Theresa, in which he not only confirmed his father's recognition of the Pragmatic Sanction, but also made an offer of military help in case of need. The Hohenzollerns had an old and unsubstantial claim to the Silesian duchies of Brieg, Liegnitz, Jagerndorf, and Wohlau which Frederick was determined to press if he found a suitable opportunity, and in the meantime he lulled Vienna into a false sense of security by his honeyed words. For a brief space it appeared as if he might be disappointed, since Europe gave some evidence of intending to abide by its promise to the late Emperor, but the Habsburg dominions formed too unprotected a mass of plunder for the Powers to resist the temptation to help themselves. Bavaria, in particular, soon began to display a hostile attitude, and Frederick realized that he would not be left to act alone. In December, 1740, he invaded Silesia with an army more than twice as strong as its Austrian garrison, and before long the greater part of the province, including Breslau, was in Prussian hands.

At the same time that he was seizing Habsburg territory Frederick sent Baron Gotter to Vienna to offer Maria Theresa his vote at the forthcoming Imperial election, and also armed assistance against her enemies, if she would satisfy his Silesian claims.

Maria Theresa indignantly refused, and set about collecting an army with which to recover the lost province, while she appealed to the guarantors of the Pragmatic Sanction for assistance against this unprovoked aggression. Only Great Britain, however, showed any disposition to fulfil her obligations, and she was already at war with Spain: elsewhere, Frederick found imitators, not opponents. Saxony withdrew her recognition; Spain, Sardinia, and Bavaria began to push their claims; and although Fleury was desirous of peace he was nearing the end of his life, while there were many voices raised in France in favour of the traditional policy of crushing the Habsburgs whenever and wherever the opportunity should occur; now, it was urged, was the chance to destroy their power for ever.

Before long, nearly all the Powers were engaged in the struggle —or rather struggles, for there were three of them, namely that of England against Spain, of Frederick to retain Silesia, and of the Elector of Bavaria to obtain the heritage of Charles VI. Nevertheless, some little time elapsed ere all the Powers appeared as principals: France, for example, did not officially declare war on Great Britain and Austria until 1744—the year, significantly enough, after the death of Fleury—although three years before that Louis XV had sent one of his Marshals across Europe at the head of some thirty thousand Frenchmen masquerading as auxiliaries of Bavaria. The War of the Austrian Succession was, indeed, often marked by the ironical, not least in the coincidence that on the very day when the Elector of Bavaria was being crowned as the Emperor Charles VII, his ancestral capital, Munich, was capitulating to the Austrians to avoid being sacked.

There were three main theatres of war, namely Central Europe, Flanders and west Germany, and Italy, and it is necessary to trace the progress of events on these fronts in order to realize the influence of the actual fighting upon the policy of those who were engaged in it.

Frederick cared little what became of Maria Theresa's other enemies so long as he was allowed to retain Silesia, and his campaigns showed pretty plainly that he was playing solely for his own hand. He was aided by the efforts of British diplomacy to persuade Maria Theresa to buy him off with the cession of Silesia.

George II was fearful for Hanover, while ministers in London wished to revive the Grand Alliance of the earlier years of the century, when France, Spain, and Bavaria faced a Europe in

arms; in short, they were thinking of the war against England's old enemy, France, and they considered a German duchy was a small price to pay for the accession of Prussia to their cause: Maria Theresa, who had to do the paying, not unnaturally took a different view.

All the same, the pressure upon Austria from all sides save the east was such that she must have succumbed had she not taken some step to reduce the number of her enemies: British sea-power could exercise but little immediate influence upon the campaigns in Central Europe, while the army under George II was held in check by the French threat to invade Hanover. There was no other choice than to buy off Frederick, and in June, 1742, the Preliminaries of Breslau ceded to Prussia both Upper and Lower Silesia, including Glatz, but not Teschen and Troppau, while six weeks later a definitive peace was concluded at Berlin. Saxony, which had also formed part of the anti-Austrian coalition, withdrew from it at this time. Frederick had the less compunction in deserting his allies since their co-operation with him in the field had been none too happy, while, like Bismarck but unlike more recent German rulers, he always knew when and where to stop.

The termination of hostilities by no means implied a cessation of diplomatic activity on the part of the Prussian monarch, for he felt far from secure in his conquest; he feared that if Maria Theresa's arms were too successful in other theatres, they might be turned against him once more, and such apprehensions were enhanced when, as a direct consequence of the Peace of Berlin, the Austrians drove out of Bohemia a French army which had invaded that kingdom. Accordingly, Frederick directed his energies throughout the year 1743 to encouraging the Emperor not to come to terms with Vienna, to embittering relations between Austria and Russia, and to endeavouring to persuade the Turks to enter the war. In May, 1744, his efforts took shape in the Union of Frankfort, by which Prussia, Hesse-Cassel, and the Elector Palatine bound themselves together to secure the restoration of Charles VII to his hereditary dominions, the maintenance of the Emperor in his rights, and the re-establishment of peace in Germany.

With this end in view Frederick re-entered the struggle in August, 1744, by invading Bohemia, and this fresh contest between Prussia and Austria lasted until the end of the following year. During its course an event took place which profoundly affected

the political situation in Germany, namely the death of the Emperor in January, 1745. The new Elector of Bavaria was a mere youth, and there was no chance of his reviving his father's claims, which in any case had in the end proved of little benefit either to Charles VII or to his Bavarian subjects. A few months later a British defeat by the French at Fontenoy and the outbreak of the Forty-Five offered Frederick further opportunities of improving his position. George II saw himself menaced with the loss of his British throne to Prince Charles Edward, and of his Electorate to the Maréchal de Saxe, and he was in consequence only too willing to reduce the number of his enemies. Frederick, on his part, was in great straits for money, while he was very anxious in case success should crown the efforts of Maria Theresa to bring Russia into the field against him. The result was the Convention of Hanover in August, 1745: by this agreement the King of Prussia bound himself not to vote against the election of Maria Theresa's husband, Francis, as Emperor, and he guaranteed Hanover to George II.

The Convention of Hanover was extremely unwelcome in Vienna, not least because Austria was given no more than six weeks in which to accede to it or face the consequences. Before long, too, further pressure was applied by the British government in the shape of a threat that unless Maria Theresa came to terms with Frederick the subsidies which she was receiving would cease. In the circumstances it was only natural that she should protest against British bad faith, and many of her advisers recalled the diplomacy of Bolingbroke a generation earlier. Nevertheless the military situation eventually compelled Austria to give way, and on Christmas Day, 1745, the Treaty of Dresden definitely ceded Silesia and Glatz to Frederick, who in return acknowledged Francis I as Emperor and guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction in so far as it related to Germany. Having for five years joined and deserted the various belligerent Powers with equal readiness as it suited his convenience, Frederick thus finally withdrew from the War of the Austrian Succession, the sole substantial gainer from the conflict.

If the interest in the struggle in central Europe had mainly centred round Austria and Prussia, in the west the war had not been long in assuming the old form of a Franco-British conflict. In this the French were greatly aided, not only by the generalship of the Maréchal de Saxe, but also by the outbreak of the Forty-

Five. As in the case of the Habsburgs, so in that of England, it had long been a cardinal maxim of French diplomacy to strike the enemy in the rear. While Scotland was still independent she had, as the ally of France, served this purpose admirably, and even after the union of the crowns she had been made to contribute to French ends. Both Richelieu and Louis XIV had sought to profit by the domestic difficulties of the Stuarts, and when that dynasty was dethroned France was not slow to take advantage of Jacobite feeling: it was solely due to the peculiar position of the Duke of Orleans that a different policy was pursued in respect of the Fifteen.

At no time was it the intention of the French government merely to replace the Guelphs by the Stuarts, for the dealings of Louis XIV with Charles II were not such as to encourage the belief that if the fallen dynasty were restored to the throne it would prove any more susceptible to French pressure. Rather was it the aim of France to revive the state of affairs which had existed before the union of the crowns. Louis XIV had hoped to create an independent Irish kingdom for James II which would have been a perpetual menace to William of Orange in London, and on more than one occasion his great-grandson pursued a policy which had as its end a Stuart restoration in Edinburgh alone: to their credit let it be said that the exiled dynasty steadfastly refused to lend itself to any such project. For the rest, when the general international situation did not admit of an attempt on a big scale, the fire of the Jacobite enthusiasm was always kept alight against the time when it might be advisable to fan it into a blaze.

That Jacobitism was still a very real force in the middle of the eighteenth century there can be no doubt, and the Whig Pulteney declared in 1743 that two-thirds of the nation was opposed to the reigning dynasty. On the other hand, the Jacobites drew much of their support from the national dislike of being ruled by a foreign monarch, and so French diplomacy was constrained to walk warily. The British had shown in no uncertain manner in 1701 that they would not accept a sovereign at the hands of the King of France, so there was always the difficulty that if the French government gave the Stuarts too much support, many of the latter's political supporters would, for patriotic reasons, refuse to move at the critical moment. These complications had come to be thoroughly appreciated at Versailles, where the policy was to aid the Jacobites just enough to distract the government in London, but not

so much as to arouse the traditional British xenophobia or to restore James III to all the three kingdoms which his father had lost.

These tactics succeeded admirably during the War of the Austrian Succession. The original intention had been a direct invasion of England, and in February, 1744, Saxe was instructed to land at the mouth of the Thames and to occupy London: a month later, however, the expedition had to be postponed owing to the weather, and further storms, which destroyed a number of transports collected at Brest, caused its abandonment. In the following year Prince Charles Edward, with the most slender resources, came within an ace of success, and the advantages which France gained from his victory at Prestonpans, and subsequent advance to Derby, were enormous. Ten battalions of infantry were at once withdrawn from Flanders, and it was not long before the British forces there were reduced to a mere shadow: German troops as well were sent to suppress the rising, since it was by no means certain what amount of reliance could be placed upon the native British. In consequence, Saxe had a series of easy conquests in the Low Countries, and it was not long before he reached the frontier of the United Provinces. France certainly received a handsome dividend on what she expended for the Stuarts in the Forty-Five.

The third main theatre of war was Italy, where the death of Charles VI seemed to afford Elizabeth Farnese the chance of establishing yet another member of her family upon a throne. The struggle there assumed the time-honoured form of a contest between the Habsburg and Bourbon dynasties, with the House of Savoy taking its wares to the best market: in the present instance this proved to be the Austrian, for the danger to her Italian possessions compelled Maria Theresa to come to terms with the "Prussia of Italy". The British fleet also played its part in the Mediterranean campaign, for it appeared off Naples and threatened to bombard that city if Charles III (Don Carlos of former days) gave any assistance to his Bourbon relatives against Maria Theresa. On the other side France and Spain drew even closer together, and in October, 1743, was concluded the Treaty of Fontainebleau, more usually known as the second Family Compact. This pledged France to help her southern neighbour to recover Gibraltar and Minorca; to recognize the rights of Don Felipe (younger brother of the Neapolitan monarch) to the

Milanese, Parma, and Piacenza; and to declare formal war on Britain and Austria, which, as we have seen, she had not at that time yet done.

Thereafter the course of the war in Italy was marked by a good deal of fighting, but without any decisive victory for either side, though on balance Maria Theresa found herself in the better position. Thanks to her own energy and courage, and to the assistance of Sardinia by land and of England by sea, the Italian campaigns had left her not merely with her own territory undiminished, but in possession of that of the Duke of Modena as well. That at the peace she had to give up this acquisition, and also to sacrifice Parma and Piacenza, was due to what had happened elsewhere. Italy had to pay the debts of Flanders.

As the years passed there came over the principal combatants a desire for peace, though it must be admitted that friction between allies had on both sides much to do with the growth of such sentiments. Frederick II had already withdrawn from the conflict in circumstances noted above, while French intrigues with Savoy behind the backs of the Spaniards had, almost on the morrow of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, resulted in a coolness between Paris and Madrid. Then, in July, 1746, Philip V of Spain died, and his successor, Ferdinand VI, not only displayed little interest in the Italian ambitions of his half-brothers, but was by nature of a pacific disposition. Great Britain and the United Provinces were equally inclined towards peace. Indeed, Maria Theresa, who had at last secured a promise of Russian assistance, alone wished to continue the war, but she was powerless in the face of British opposition. Pelham's government informed the King of Sardinia that its financial aid would come to an end, and unwilling as that monarch was to see another Bourbon established upon an Italian throne, he could not fight without British subsidies. Maria Theresa had no means of bringing pressure to bear on London, but she could do nothing in Italy without the Sardinian army and the British fleet, so she had to give way.

Louis XV, whose arms had latterly been crowned with such success in the old cock-pit of the Netherlands, played a prominent part in the ensuing settlement: he declared that he wished to make peace, not like a merchant, but like a King. All the same there was a good deal of manœuvring for position before the final pacification was effected. Kaunitz, whose long ascendancy in Austrian counsels was just beginning, endeavoured to open direct

negotiations with France, but the latter was found to be already in communication with Britain, with whom she preferred, if possible, to come to terms. The Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle had actually met in March, 1748, but, as in the case of so many similar gatherings, most of the real business was transacted privately and directly between the Powers chiefly concerned. Finally, on October 18th, a definite treaty was concluded between Britain, France, and the United Provinces; Spain adhered to it two days later; and before the end of the following month Austria and Sardinia had given their reluctant assent.

The basis upon which the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was concluded was a general restitution of conquests, though there were some exceptions. Silesia and Glatz, for example, were guaranteed to Frederick, while the ambitions of Elizabeth Farnese were at last satisfied by the cession of Parma and Piacenza to Don Felipe Charles Emmanuel of Sardinia, on the other hand, had to content himself with the recovery of Savoy and Nice, which had been occupied during the war by the forces of the Bourbon Powers. For the rest, the Pragmatic Sanction was guaranteed, except in respect of Silesia, Glatz, Parma, and Piacenza; Francis I was recognized as Emperor; the Duke of Modena regained his dominions; and in spite of the protests of Maria Theresa the Barrier fortresses were again committed to the proved inefficiency of their Dutch garrisons.

As between France and Britain the former agreed to conditions which were commensurate neither with her sacrifices nor with her successes. In addition to the restoration of all conquests in the Netherlands and in Italy, the French evacuated Madras, recognized George II and the Hanoverian Succession, and promised to demolish the fortifications of Dunkirk. Great Britain, on her part, reluctantly gave up Cape Breton, but received a pledge that Spain would carry out the commercial concessions promised at Utrecht. There was no determination of boundaries between the British and French possessions in America, and the only stipulation was that matters should be restored to their original footing.

In effect, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, like the war of which it marked the termination, was in the main indecisive, though some of its provisions were to stand the test of time. The territorial settlement of Italy, although upset during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, was substantially unaltered until the Risorgimento, while Silesia remained largely in Prussian hands until the

second decade of the twentieth century. The struggle for maritime and colonial supremacy was left unsettled, since Britain and France had in reality suspended hostilities, not because they had abandoned their ambitions, but because they had exhausted their immediate resources. Otherwise the Treaty merely marked a stage in the rise of Prussia and Sardinia, in the decline of the United Provinces, in the relaxation of the old alliance between Britain and Austria, and in the intervention of Russia in the affairs of Central Europe.

Such was the close of that War of the Austrian Succession of which Macaulay wrote—with some exaggeration, it must be admitted. "On the head of Frederick is all the blood which was shed in a war which raged during many years and in every quarter of the globe, the blood of the column of Fontenoy, the blood of the mountaineers who were slaughtered at Culloden. The evils produced by his wickedness were felt in lands where the name of Prussia was unknown; and, in order that he might rob a neighbour whom he had promised to defend, black men fought on the coast of Coromandel, and red men scalped each other by the Great Lakes of North America."

CHAPTER IV

THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE, 1748–1783

With the turn of the eighteenth century overseas problems began to affect even more closely the course of events in Europe, and, as we have seen, it was becoming increasingly difficult for Powers to indulge in hostilities in the New World while remaining nominally at peace in the Old; indeed, the day was not far distant when Chatham could speak of Canada having been won on the battle-fields of Germany. The struggle between Britain and Spain over the right of search and the interpretation to be put upon the commercial clauses in the Treaty of Utrecht was, it is true, soon merged in the War of the Austrian Succession, but its very occurrence was prophetic of what lay ahead. The interest of the next international contest, namely the Seven Years' War, was at least as great outside the Old World as within it, and its results in the Americas and in India were to be far more lasting than in Europe.

Nor was it surprising that such should be the case. Just as the ambitions of Prussia and Sardinia were a disturbing factor in Continental politics, so were those of Britain overseas. Ever since the Restoration in 1660 she had been building a colonial empire, but this latter was still only in its early stages, and the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had not taken the matter any farther. Thus, in the middle of the century it was as yet undecided whether North America was to be Latin or Anglo-Saxon, and in India he would have been a bold prophet who would have cared to forecast whether France or Britain would be the heir of the decadent Moghuls.

In spite of British acquisitions at Utrecht the American possessions of King George were shut in on three sides by the colonies of France and Spain. To the north lay Canada; to the west was a line of French forts, reaching from the Great Lakes to New Orleans; and to the south were Louisiana and the Spanish colony of Florida. Only to the east, on the Atlantic, were the British territories unthreatened, and that solely if the command of the sea was retained. Farther away were the

West Indies, that bone of contention between France, Spain, and Britain, and it would have been difficult to exaggerate their economic importance in that age. The success of Louis XIV in setting his grandson upon the throne of Spain had constituted a considerable menace to British interests in the Americas, for henceforth the French and Spanish colonial authorities tended to act closely together, whereas they had formerly been opposed. The Family Compacts were eyed askance by statesmen in London, not because of their effect upon the fate of Italian duchies, but on account of possible repercussion in the Caribbean Sea and the valley of the Mississippi.

In India the earlier years of the century had been for English and French alike a period mainly of commercial prosperity and silent growth, and both nations were occupied in warding off the worst consequences of the rapid decline of the Moghul Empire. During the War of the Spanish Succession various agreements for a local neutrality were made between many of the British, French, and Dutch settlements, and apart from some uneasiness as to the fate of incoming and outgoing ships, neither side seems to have feared aggression on the part of the other. In the War of the Austrian Succession it was otherwise, and the roar of the French guns off Madras in 1746 announced the beginning of a new era in the East, although in Bengal a strict neutrality continued to be observed between the British and French. The principle that peace or war between European nations necessarily involves peace or war between their distant possessions had received recognition.

While all this combustible material was lying about in India and in the Americas, every day that passed afforded further evidence that, in spite of the hopes of Louis XV, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was a mere truce. It had satisfied nobody, which is tantamount to saying that it had dissatisfied everybody. The French felt that they had been made the catspaw of the King of Prussia, while Maria Theresa still nourished a grudge against her British allies for compelling her to make peace when her prospects appeared so encouraging. For a few years the Powers concerned were content to lick their wounds, but in every case with the determination to renew the conflict when opportunity occurred.

One thing at any rate was clear, and it was that Frederick had by no means abandoned his designs upon his neighbours'

possessions in the effort to link up his own scattered dominions in one geographical and political whole. In 1752, believing himself to be on the point of death, he had drawn up a political testament for his successor. In this document he stressed the desirability of acquiring by conquest the electorate of Saxony, Polish West Prussia, and Swedish Pomerania, but of these he attached the greatest importance to Saxony, both on account of its wealth and of its strategic position as a bulwark of defence for Brandenburg against attack from the south. The Prussian King proposed that the Elector of Saxony should be compensated with Bohemia, which would have the added advantage of further weakening the Habsburgs. The French knew of these designs, and, with a vivid recollection of what had happened in the War of the Austrian Succession, they saw no reason why they should again pull Prussian chestnuts out of the fire. In this attitude they were encouraged by Kaunitz, who, after representing Maria Theresa at Versailles for three years, had in 1753 returned to Vienna to become Chancellor. The stage was set for the Diplomatic Revolution and the Seven Years' War.

Long, however, before the first shots were fired in the European theatre hostilities had begun unofficially between Britain and France in America, largely as a result of the failure of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle to define the boundaries of their respective colonies. The opening incident occurred near Fort Duquesne in June, 1754, and, after some fruitless negotiations, twelve months later a British squadron under Boscowen was sent into the Straits of Belle Isle to intercept French ships carrying soldiers and stores, and two transports, as well as a number of merchantmen, were seized. The government of Louis XV did not reply with an immediate declaration of war, but it was clear that this could not be long delayed, and the necessity of protecting Hanover compelled Great Britain to look for assistance on the mainland of Europe. Recourse was had at first to the old ally, Austria, and Maria Theresa was found to be quite willing to help in the defence of the electorate, but only on condition that the British subsidies should be on a sufficiently large scale to enable her to take up arms against Prussia: now, this was exactly what George II and his ministers did not want, for it would have exposed Hanover to attack by the Prussians as well as by the French, and so the Anglo-Austrian discussions came to nothing.

The next approach was to Frederick, who proved much more

amenable, and in January, 1756, he signed the Treaty of Westminster, by which he guaranteed the neutrality of Hanover: thus the French, who had been for many years united with him in a defensive alliance, found themselves prevented by their Prussian ally from attacking the German possessions of George II. In these circumstances it is not surprising that Frederick's action should have roused ill-feeling in France, and Kaunitz took full advantage of French resentment. Accordingly, on May 1st, 1756, was concluded the Treaty of Versailles between Austria and France: it comprised a convention of neutrality, a defensive alliance, and a secret agreement of five articles. Under the first of these heads Maria Theresa bound herself to observe absolute neutrality in the war between Britain and France, while Louis XV promised to respect the Austrian Netherlands and the other Habsburg possessions. By the defensive alliance the two Powers guaranteed to each other the security and reciprocal defence of their European dominions, and mutually promised an auxiliary force of 24,000 men in the case of either being attacked. Finally, by the secret convention, Austria signified her readiness to intervene in case a Power allied to England should invade the territory of His Most Christian Majesty, and Louis XV gave a similar promise to the Empress.

Such was the famous Diplomatic Revolution which put an end to a system of alliances which had lasted for two generations. A close examination of the conditions in which it took place would seem to show that, with the exception of Kaunitz, who from the beginning had a clear view of what he wanted, circumstances had as much to do with the new arrangement as had the deliberate resolve of the statesmen concerned, though general dissatisfaction dating at least from the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle played its part.

Thus came about that Franco-Austrian understanding which Louis XIV had envisaged in the last years of his life, but in very different circumstances from those in which Le Roi Soleil would have concluded it. Austria clearly was the gainer by the Treaty of Versailles. She changed the most formidable Power in Europe from an enemy into a friend; she freed herself from anxiety in respect of the Netherlands; and she recovered her freedom of action against Frederick. France, on the other hand, had allowed herself to be rushed into some dangerous concessions whereby she made it impossible for herself to obtain in the Low Countries

any indemnification for potential overseas losses; nor was this all, for she converted Prussia, which had no particular quarrel with her, from a neutral into an enemy. French diplomacy was at its weakest in the middle of the eighteenth century: Saint-Sévérin, who represented France at Aix-la-Chapelle, and Cardinal de Bernis, who negotiated the Treaty of Versailles, both did their country an ill turn, though Louis XV must, of course, bear his share of the blame.

On the other side, Prussia stood to benefit very considerably. Frederick did not believe that the French would be of any great assistance to the Empress, owing to their war against Britain, while there was little chance of Spain giving them any active support so long as Ferdinand VI was on the throne. It was true that ever since 1748 there had been in existence a defensive alliance between Austria and Russia directed against him, but he reckoned, mistakenly as the event was to show, that Maria Theresa could depend even less on her Russian than on her French allies; the health of the Empress Elizabeth was none too good; the heir, Peter, was a fervent admirer of the Prussian monarch; and the leading Russian statesmen were in British pay. Furthermore, Frederick stood a much better chance of realizing his Saxon ambitions in concert with England than with France, for the Dauphine was a daughter of the Elector of Saxony. As for Great Britain, the Diplomatic Revolution was calculated to prove of greater advantage to the dynastic interests of her German ruler than to herself, though as events turned out the reverse proved to be the case.

The summer of 1756 was thus characterized by a situation of the most extreme tension, and little doubt existed in Vienna that Frederick would seize the first opportunity to attack the Empress. The movement of some Russian troops to the Russian frontier, subsequently countermanded at the request of Maria Theresa as unduly provocative, gave Frederick an excuse to mobilize. By the end of June he was writing to his representative in Vienna that war was inevitable, and to his sister that "we have one foot in the stirrup, and I think the other will soon follow". It did follow very soon. Frederick addressed to the Empress an ultimatum as to her armaments and intentions, and, without waiting for her reply, invaded Saxony at the end of August. To an envoy from the Saxon Elector he announced, "If fortune favours me, the Elector will not only be amply compensated for

everything, but I shall take as much thought for his interests as for my own". Frederick Augustus realized that this meant embroiling him with the Empress in an attempt to secure him the kingdom of Bohemia as compensation for the cession of his electorate to Prussia, so he retired to Poland: the Saxon army was compelled to lay down its arms, and by the middle of October the electorate was in Prussian hands.

The invasion of Saxony united the continental nations against Frederick, and not only Austria, Russia, and France, but the Empire itself and Sweden, resolved to take up arms against the disturber of the peace. A second Treaty of Versailles was signed in May, 1757, between France and Austria, and its terms are evidence that the two Powers intended to put an end to the Prussian menace once and for all. France bound herself to furnish, over and above the 24,000 auxiliaries prescribed by the previous treaty, the Austrian armies with 10,000 German soldiers, put 105,000 men of her own into the field, and pay an annual subsidy of twelve million florins. In return she was to obtain the towns of Mons, Ypres, Furnes, Ostend, and Nieuport: the rest of the Netherlands was assigned to Don Felipe whose duchies of Parma and Piacenza were to revert to the Empress. The two Powers further promised not to lay down their arms until the King of Prussia had been forced to cede Silesia and Glatz to Austria, and Magdeburg and Halberstadt to Sweden. In February, 1757, the Tsarina also promised not to make peace until Silesia and Glatz had been restored and Prussia had been finally enfeebled.

The stage was now set for the Seven Years' War, and during the earlier part of the ensuing conflict Frederick, who had the advantage of operating on interior lines, made headway against his enemies with surprising success. The French were defeated at Rossbach, while the Austrians, after being vanquished at Prague and victorious at Kolin, had been utterly routed at Leuthen. In April, 1758, a second Treaty of Westminster stipulated that neither Britain nor Prussia should make a separate peace, and Frederick was promised a subsidy of £670,000. The real danger to Prussia, however, came from the east, whence the Russians, although checked from time to time, pressed slowly forward, until in October, 1760, they occupied Berlin itself. The next twelve months saw Frederick, surrounded by foes, on the very brink of destruction, and he was only saved by the death, in

January, 1762, of the Tsarina Elizabeth. Her successor, Peter III, at once completely reversed Russian policy, and by June of the same year he was Frederick's ally. This new alliance was not destined to be of long duration, for Peter was soon murdered: Catherine II, however, remained neutral, and this fact was of enormous advantage to Prussia. Indeed, that Power was saved from destruction by the vacillation of Russia, who may be said to have intervened decisively in the affairs of Central Europe. What had been a threat in the War of the Austrian Succession developed into a very definite reality in the Seven Years' War.

While Frederick was thus experiencing to the full the vicissitudes of fortune, his British ally, after a bad start with the loss of Minorca, was going on from strength to strength under the inspiring leadership of William Pitt the Elder. The year 1757 had witnessed the victories of Clive in India, and the consequent resolving of any doubt as to which European Power was in future to be supreme in that country; its successor was marked by the capture of Louisburg; and in 1759 the capture of Quebec by Wolfe, entailed the loss of Canada by the French. Frederick was certainly earning the subsidies with which he was supplied by London, for in the circumstances France could provide neither the men nor the money to retain her overseas possessions.

At this point, yet another Power, namely Spain, began to show signs of entering the conflict. Ferdinand VI died in 1759 and was succeeded by Charles III, previously King of the Two Sicilies, who was frankly in sympathy with France. The Duke of Choiseul, who had by now succeeded the Cardinal de Bernis as chief minister of Louis XV, was determined to take full advantage of this unexpected piece of good luck, for the fortunes of France were at a very low ebb, after the loss of Quebec and the defeat at Minden, and he was not very well informed, as events were soon to show, about the condition of Spanish resources. The result was the conclusion of the third Family Compact, to which Naples and Parma also adhered, in August, 1761. After stipulating for the mutual aid to be afforded, the two Powers promised not to treat for peace "save by mutual and common agreement and consent". By a secret convention Spain undertook to declare war on May 1st, 1762, if peace had not been concluded by that date, and Portugal was to be compelled, if necessary by force, to embrace the cause of the Bourbon Powers. Further, any "Power

which shall become the enemy of the one or the other of the two Crowns" was declared the enemy of both.

Not the least interesting aspect of the third Family Compact was the commercial. In the first place, Spaniards and Neapolitans were no longer to be classed as aliens in France, while the French were to enjoy the same advantages in Spain and the Two Sicilies. Further arrangements included liberty of import and export for subjects of each Crown in the dominions of the others; equal treatment in the matter of trade, taxes, and navigation; and a united attitude on the part of the representatives of the Bourbon Powers in their relations with foreign states. The growing importance of economic considerations is thus strongly emphasised in this otherwise largely dynastic agreement, and it may be observed that the prospect of freer trade between the Bourbon states did little to recommend the third Family Compact in British commercial circles.

While these negotiations were in progress Choiseul was also treating for peace with England, where the accession of George III in 1760 had considerably modified the existing political situation. What the French statesman appears to have had in view was to use the Family Compact either to induce the British government to modify its terms, or, if the war continued, to supplement the diminishing resources of France by the strength of neutral Spain. He over-estimated Spanish might, and he did not know Pitt. Whether the Englishman was at once aware of the details of the Family Compact is immaterial; he knew enough to realize what was at stake, and he became convinced, not only that war with Spain was inevitable, but also that it should be declared by Britain at once.

Pitt had little difficulty in persuading his colleagues to break off the negotiations with France, but the majority of them declined to go so far as an immediate declaration of war against Spain. Cabinet meetings in the middle of September, 1761, were in consequence stormy in the extreme. The Great Commoner laid before his colleagues an intercepted letter from the Spanish representative in Paris, which revealed everything. He showed, in an impressive speech, that the danger could only increase if Spain were left to declare war at the moment stipulated in the Family Compact. There was at present but one House of Bourbon. The Spanish fleet must be regarded as the French fleet. "Spain is France," he declared, "and France is Spain." It was all to no

purpose. The peace party in the Cabinet raised the objection that action could not be taken on the ground of an intercepted letter without a previous declaration of war, and that the attack on the Spanish fleet off Cape Passaro in 1718, without such a declaration, still remained a cause of bitterness. Finally, it was decided merely to make a protest to Madrid, and to ask for an explanation; perhaps also to make some advances towards a settlement of Anglo-Spanish differences in the Americas. On October 5th, 1761, Pitt resigned. The outside world thus had another example of the fact that there are definite limitations to the power of even the greatest British minister, a fact which, if remembered more often, would save that outside world many disappointments.

However pacific may have been the intentions of the new King and his advisers, events soon hurried them into the course of action which Pitt had advocated, and on January 2nd, 1762, war was declared on Spain. Then was seen the falsity of Choiseul's calculations, for France merely involved her ally in her own downfall. The campaign of 1762 entailed upon the French the loss of such possessions as they still held in the West Indies, while the British conquered Havana and the Philippines from Spain.

These successes, however, had in no way diminished the desire of George III and his new Prime Minister, Bute, for peace at the earliest possible moment. In these circumstances Frederick, surrounded by his foes, was clearly a liability, and Bute stopped the subsidies which the Prussian King had been receiving from England: instead he was offered good advice to the effect that he should make a sacrifice for the cause of peace. Frederick never forgot the treatment which he received from the British Government in 1762, and eleven years later he declined the suggestion of an English alliance because of "the indecent, I might almost say infamous, way in which England treated me at the last peace". It must be admitted that at this time the British Government had a bad reputation in the matter of the treatment of its allies. At Utrecht it had made peace with the enemy, and left them to get what terms they could, while at Aix-la-Chapelle the Austrians had been the victim of much the same manœuvre as that of which Frederick was now complaining. There was, indeed, much to be said against Britain's cynical disregard of her ally in 1762, but not by one with the record of the King of Prussia.

With Bute in power occasion was soon found for resuming negotiations with Choiseul, though at first these were, for the sake of secrecy, carried on through the medium of the Sardinian representative in the British and French capitals. The preliminaries were signed at Fontainebleau in November, 1762, but the treaty was not finally concluded until the virtual completion of the separate negotiation between Austria and Prussia. It may be noted that during the final stage of the discussions the British plenipotentiary, the Duke of Bedford, had been seriously handicapped by the fact that the Chevalier d'Eon had become acquainted with his instructions, and had passed on the information to Choiseul. So unhappy, however, were the relations between British statesmen at that time that Bedford never doubted for one moment but that he had been betrayed by Bute.

The Peace of Paris, finally concluded in February, 1763, greatly strengthened the position of Great Britain in the Americas. She received Canada and Cape Breton, but ceded to France the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon as an unfortified station for French fishermen, who were guaranteed their rights under the Treaty of Utrecht. Britain also obtained St. Vincent, Dominica, and Tobago, while Guadaloupe and Martinique fell to France. Spain regained Havana and the Philippines, but she had to surrender Florida and Minorca, and to renounce her claim to participate in the Newfoundland fishing; on the other hand, the British government agreed, in exchange for a guarantee of a limited participation in the logwood trade, to dismantle forts which had been erected in the Bay of Honduras. It was agreed that the Mississippi from source to mouth should form the frontier in North America, except for Louisiana, which France ceded to Spain as compensation for the loss of Florida. In India the *status quo* of 1749 was restored, but the French also undertook not to keep an army in Bengal. Finally, the fortifications of Dunkirk were to be reduced to the condition stipulated by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.

A few days after the conclusion of peace between Great Britain and the Bourbon Powers the Treaty of Hubertusburg put an end to the Seven Years' War in Germany. To the very last Frederick had clung to the hope that he might acquire Saxony, and in his negotiations with Peter III he had expressed his willingness to hand East Prussia over to the Tsar in exchange

for the electorate. Circumstances, however, were against him, and he had to be content with the return of Glatz by the Austrians, who had held it for two and a half years. The basis upon which peace was made was the *status quo ante bellum*. Between France and Prussia no peace was made, for the simple reason that although they had been fighting one another for nearly seven years neither had officially declared war on the other.

The Treaties of Paris and Hubertusburg settled several problems which had been envisaged at Utrecht and left unsolved at Aix-la-Chapelle. Great Britain, for example, definitely established her position as the leading maritime and colonial Power: it is true that had Pitt remained in office she would probably have obtained even more, but she was unquestionably the chief gainer by the Seven Years' War. In marked contrast was the decline of France both in Europe and overseas: her armies had been beaten in three continents, and the conditions which she was compelled to accept were the measure of her decadence. As for Frederick, his personal reputation as a general had been raised enormously, and all Europe, whether friend or foe, esteemed him as one of the greatest monarchs who had ever sat upon a throne; but this could not disguise the fact that he had failed to achieve the political object of the war, for the Prussian kingdom remained divided. One fact stood out above all others, and it was that the fate of Prussia depended upon the attitude of Russia. A century later this truth was clearly realized by another great Prussian statesman, Bismarck, but only to be forgotten by his successors, William II and Adolf Hitler.

The twenty years which followed this settlement were marked by the temporary eclipse of the very Power which in 1763 appeared to be in the strongest position, namely Great Britain. If the Treaty of Paris was one of the most gratifying international agreements which her representatives have ever signed, the Treaty of Versailles in 1783 was one of the most shameful. What, then, was the cause of this sudden reversal of fortune? It was due to two main factors—the isolation of Britain after 1763, and the repercussions of the Treaty of Paris in the New World.

The Diplomatic Revolution had put an end to the old Austro-British alliance, which had existed for two generations, and Frederick's anger at the treatment which he received in 1762 prevented the later understanding between London and Berlin from taking its place. With France and Spain there could be

